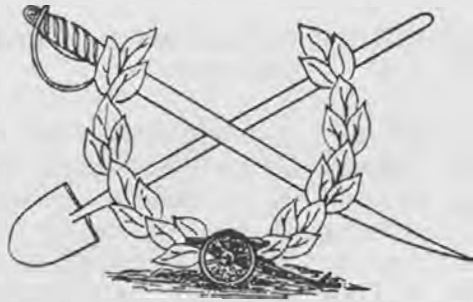


**THE CARYS AND THE PEIRCES:
MULBERRY ISLAND FAMILIES**

Papers researched and presented
by Col. (U.S.A., retired) Arthur H. Vollertsen
and Mrs. Dorothy F. Vollertsen
to the Fort Eustis, Virginia
Historical and Archaeological Association



and
Fort Eustis Historical Markers
and maps
Published as a memorial to Arthur H. Vollertsen
by his friends of the Fort Eustis
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IN MEMORIAM

ARTHUR HASTINGS VOLLERTSEN
(1910-1983)

He was born at Rochester, New York, on August 19, 1910, and graduated from Northwestern University with a degree in dentistry. He served in the U.S. Army's Dental Corps in both Europe in World War II and in Japan. He retired from the Army as a colonel at Fort Hamilton, New York, in 1965.

He was state registrar for the Sons of the American Revolution, state registrar and national public relations chairman for the National Huguenot Society, director of the Colonial Capitol Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, vice president of the Virginia Genealogical Society, active member of the Fort Eustis Historical and Archaeological Association, and the National Trust for Historical Preservation. He was a member of the American Dental Association and the Retired Officers Association as well.

He died at home in Williamsburg, Virginia, on February 14, 1983, at age 72. The funeral was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Cotesworth P. Lewis, Bruton Parish Episcopal Church, Williamsburg. Interment was at Arlington National Cemetery with military honors.

His widow is Dorothy Fox Vollertsen, his co-author and an active leader in the local, state and national organization of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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PREFACE

Somewhere along the line of an organization's work, its efforts must be conserved and made public in a form that will be available for future generations of historians and genealogists. Since the beginning of the association, a few of its members have mimeographed their papers, assisted by other members, and the works became buried in file cabinets and in vertical files of some libraries. Many of the writers were amateur historians and few had any experience in historical research. The overriding value was interest--a passion to reveal the past. Such persons were the Vollertsens, touched by their own concern to discover who they were, and translating that feeling to historical families in the Virginia Peninsula area. Both the Cary and Peirce papers were published in Hugh S. Watson's weekly column "Family Tree" in the local Sunday newspaper.

Besides accomplishing these papers, the Vollertsens worked diligently compiling for publication Warwick County, Virginia, tax lists of 1782-1800 and the federal census records of 1810-1880, including Black census records. The Vollertsens edited and indexed the work, and wrote a comprehensive preface. The association published it as Who Was Who in 1977.

We do not pretend that the papers published have the last word. Much more may be "discovered, uncovered or recovered" and perhaps written and published better, or be more inclusive of Mulberry Island's other families. We present this compilation in the spirit of present understanding until that time.


Richard F. "Dick" Ivy
Citizen Publications

Gift to Griffiths Library



The Cary coat-of-arms on the top slab of "Mylles" Cary's tomb at his Windmill Plantation property, (1956 photograph) now located on a farm. There's an historical marker on Denbigh Boulevard at Garrow Road, Newport News. The photo and one on page 20 are used courtesy of Mrs. Gerald (Carol Curtis) Welch of Queen's Lake, York County. Map showing Windmill Point is on page 34.

THE COLONIAL CARYS IN RELATION TO MULBERRY ISLAND

In the language of the Celtic people who lived in the British Isles at the time of Julius Caesar, a fortified place was called a "caer."¹ When the inhabitants of Devon, England, as well as Scotland, Ireland and Wales, began to assume the names of the lands upon which they lived, those living inside a "caer" assumed the name Cary, Carew, Ker, Carr and other similar derivations. The Devon Carys originally spelled their name K-a-r-i, which was modified through the ages to Cary.

About the end of the twelfth century, a Cary of Devon was occupant of the manor of Cary (mentioned in the Domesday Book)² on the western border of Devon. A penniless cadet of this family was forced to leave his Devon home after his name had been temporarily ruined during the War of the Roses. Many successful English courtiers descended from him. One, becoming a gentleman of the Privy Chamber of Henry VIII, at the suggestion of his king agreeably married Mary Boleyn. Although her progeny bearing the Cary name have long ago ceased to exist, they were Earls of Monmouth and Dover in the time of the Stuarts. The other Cary line of aristocrats is still prominent in England today.³

Some Carys as early as the fourteenth century were merchants in Bristol and it was from these Carys that the emigrant Miles Cary was descended. His father was John Cary, a "draper," and his mother was Alice Hobson. John Cary had been imprisoned for taking part in the Yeomans' Royalist plot, and Bristol had been captured by the Parliamentary Army in 1645, when Miles Cary decided to emigrate.⁴ He was then about 22 years old.

It was the custom for a newcomer to Virginia in the seventeenth century to seek lodging for a time in the household of some established planter until he could build a house of his own. Meanwhile, if he was a bachelor, it was not unusual for him to secure a position in the community at once by marriage. Miles Cary started off in the most approved manner. He went to live with Thomas Taylor on the

Warwick River (across from Mulberry Island), and not long afterwards married his host's daughter Anne Taylor.⁵ In Virginia, the families of large estates had their social status fixed, for the most part, before they ever came over. This was true of such families as the Randolphs, Claibornes and Carys among others, so from the outset the emigrant-merchant Miles Cary had some social prominence.⁶

In addition to marrying his host's daughter, he started out to acquire land. He took out his first patent in 1654 when, in consideration of the transportation of 60 persons into the colony, he located 3,000 acres of land at the Falls of Acquia Creek in the Northern Neck. However, he never "seated" this land. (It was the custom of the time to grant patents for the transportation of persons into the Colony. It was also a condition of Virginia patents that the land so granted must be "planted" and "seated" within three years.⁷ In 1666 this was defined as "building a house and keeping stock, one whole yeare upon the land," which was accounted as "seating" and "cleering, tending and planting an acre of ground," which was "planting."⁸ On September 20, 1655, Miles Cary, who now held the rank of major in the Colonial Militia, patented 94 acres in Warwick County at the head of Pott Ash Creek (across the river from Mulberry Island) adjoining Colonel Sam Mathews and Thomas Taylor.⁹

About 1657, his father-in-law Thomas Taylor died and willed him his home place on the Warwick River. This land was originally patented in 1624 by John Baynham and was supposed to consist of 350 acres but was found by survey later actually to contain 688 acres.¹⁰ It was described as "three miles up the main creek between Haxom's Gaole and Blunt Point, adjoining Capt. Samuel Mathews and Wm. Clayborne."¹¹ On the same day that he took a patent confirming his purchase of the Baynham patent, Thomas Taylor took out an original patent for 250 acres, in consideration of five head rights, for the Magpy Swamp tract.¹² On March 15, 1657, Miles Cary took out a patent confirming his possession of this tract, as bequeathed him by Thomas Taylor, and by his own will annexed it to the "home place." Later, Miles Cary purchased Zachary Cripps'

lands, which, with small additions by original patent, made up two parcels--one aggregating 195 acres lying at the south end of Mulberry Island, over against Saxon's Gaol on Mulberry Island, including Joyle's Neck, and the other aggregating 1,144 acres adjoining Magpy Swamp. This included Claiborne's Neck, later known as Richneck, and the plantation known as "The Forest." Still later he purchased Capt. Thomas Flint's land lying up the Warwick River.¹³ Thomas Flint had been granted a patent for 1,000 acres on September 20, 1628 "upon the south shore of Warwick River, adjoining Robert Poole, John Rolfe, deceased, and Capt. William Peirce."¹⁴ Thomas Flint's patent represented the purchase of Stanley Hundred from the widow of Sir George Yeardley.¹⁵ The term "hundred" originated as a territorial division in England and is said to go back prior to the time of Alfred the Great (849-901 A.D.) into the beginnings of Teutonic law and custom.¹⁶ Alfred is reported to have divided the kingdom in the late ninth century into shires, hundreds, and tithings, a tithing being a community of ten freeholders and their families; ten tithings composing a hundred--hence the name--which was subordinate in size to the shire.

In May 1636 the will of John Brewer left to his son John, "my" plantation in Virginia known as Stanley Hundred.¹⁷ From this it would appear that Thomas Flint sold Stanley Hundred to Brewer. Later, on March 1, 1637, Flint took out another patent for 850 acres lying "upon the river" towards Stanley Hundred. In his will, Miles Cary recites "a tract or parcel of land which lyeth up Warwick River, formerly belonging unto Capt. Thomas Flint and since purchased by me."¹⁸

As a result of all the above transactions, Miles Cary at the time of his death had four separate plantations, aggregating at least 2,637 acres, not to mention his unseated patent for 3,000 acres on the Northern Neck.¹⁹ These four plantations were Windmill Point, The Forest, Magpie Swamp, and the former Thomas Flint property which "lyeth up Warwick River."

The average size of landed property held by leading planters in the seventeenth century was

estimated to be 5,000 acres. but this refers to patents of wild land on the frontier.²⁰ In the "settlements" even at the end of the century few owned as much as 5,000 acres; there the large settlements exceeded 2,000 acres.²¹ It was not until the mid-seventeenth century, when the interior had been opened up and the number of slaves had increased, that the typical large landholdings in Virginia are found.²²

In describing patents and land holdings, often reference is made to various large trees. In the mid-seventeenth century it was estimated that a fourth of the trees in Virginia forests were walnut, with now and then a hickory.²³ The habit of these trees is to be intolerant of shade and to resist crowding. It is believed that before the colonists' arrival much of the primeval forest had already been replaced in Tidewater Virginia by a second growth on land previously cleared and cultivated by the Indians and that the forest standing at the beginning of the seventeenth century was thin and therefore let in an abundance of light. The original forest trees were scarce enough to serve as landmarks. Thus in Miles Cary's patents, we find corners called by a "great white oak" and "a great poplar." The primeval growth had been oak, chestnut, tulip-poplar, cypress and cedar. They were succeeded by walnut, hickory, ash and locust. Later, the Colonists exhausted the soil by repeated plantings of tobacco until they were compelled to patent and take up new plantations to the West.²⁴

Miles Cary's military career in the Colonial militia showed rapid advancement. He rose from captain in 1652 to colonel in 1660. The colonel of a shire in seventeenth century Virginia was charged not only with training of men for the emergency of an Indian campaign or foreign invasion, but also the organization against revolt by indentured servants and slaves, and enforcement of regulations as to tobacco culture and public health.²⁵ He was usually the presiding officer of the county court. Miles Cary also held the positions of justice in 1652 and mayor in 1654.²⁶ He died on June 10, 1667, from wounds received in the attack by the Dutch Fleet up-

on Old Point Comfort. What is believed to be the earliest gravestone still extant in Warwick is that placed over Miles Cary.²⁷

Miles' children were Thomas, Anne, Henry, Bridgett, Elizabeth, Miles and William. The eldest daughter Anne never married; Bridgett married William Bassett of New Kent County, and the youngest daughter Elizabeth married her neighbor Emanuel Wills of Mulberry Island.²⁸ The son of Bridgett and William Bassett was the grandfather of the wife of Benjamin Harrison, signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Miles Cary in his will left "the tract I now live upon" to his eldest son, Major Thomas Cary. This tract was known as "Windmill Point" and was the property Miles Cary had inherited from his father-in-law Thomas Taylor, which was the original Baynham patent.²⁹ The first home of the Warwick Carys in Virginia was here on the high bluff which divides Warwick River and Potash Creek at their confluence, facing Mulberry Island. It is on this property that Miles Cary's grave is located. Windmill Point in Warwick County is not to be confused with Sir George Yeardley's Windmill Point, originally Tobacco Point, on the south side of the James River in Prince George County where the first windmill in America was supposedly erected.³⁰

Major Thomas Cary (1647?-1708) who inherited Windmill Point was employed in 1666 before he was of age, in the construction of the fort at Old Point Comfort. He married Anne Milner of Nansemond County in 1669, and by her had Thomas, the eldest son who inherited Windmill Point, Miles, James, Milner, Elizabeth and Dorothy. It is interesting to note that Elizabeth married a man by the name of Jones. There were no less than three marriages between the Carys and Jones families.³¹ The daughter of Elizabeth Cary Jones married a cousin, William Cary, in 1724, while a Miles Cary of the sixth generation of Carys married an Elizabeth Jones, daughter of Thomas Jones of Hampton. Allen Jones of "Bourbon" on Mulberry Island was undoubtedly of this same Jones family.³² The title to the Windmill Point Plantation passed through eight generations of Carys to 1837 when the senior line became extinct and the

property passed to the Lucas descendants of the youngest daughter of Captain Thomas Cary of the fifth generation. Potash Creek is today known as Lucas Creek.

Another Cary plantation was that of Peartree Hall. Miles Cary, the son of Thomas Cary and a third generation Cary, lived on what was then Potash Creek and had a house there which was known as "Peartree Hall."³³ It stood on a bluff overlooking Potash Creek about a mile above Windmill Point. It was destroyed by fire about the beginning of the nineteenth century when the land was sold. Judge Richard Cary (1730-1789), who is buried at Peartree Hall, was a member of the committee which framed the Declaration of Rights and the first State Constitution at the Convention of 1776.³⁴ He founded a fine botanical garden on his plantation and sent seeds to scientific correspondents in France.³⁵ He married Mary, daughter of William Cole of Bolthrope (or Boldrup) plantation.³⁶ The Coles were the immigrant Miles Cary's nearest neighbors, their property fronting on the Warwick River opposite Mulberry Island. Judge Richard Cary ultimately succeeded to this property. Here are the gravesites of the Cole family, a graveyard that is today sadly nothing but a cow pasture. It is unfortunate that so many private Colonial graveyards are unkept today. However, it was true even two to three centuries ago. In July, 1702, the Grand Jury filed an indictment against the church wardens of Mulberry Island and Denby Parishes for failure to keep the churchyards and churches in repair.³⁷

Major Thomas Cary, son of the immigrant Miles Cary, in addition to inheriting Windmill Point Plantation from his father, also inherited Magpie (or Magpy) Swamp. This was part of the original patent of Miles Cary's father-in-law Thomas Taylor.³⁸ The son of Major Thomas Cary sold Magpie Swamp to his cousin Miles Cary of Peartree Hall.³⁹ At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were no less than six contemporary Miles Carys in Virginia, which to say the least causes a great deal of confusion to anyone trying to establish the genealogical line of the family, or determine which Miles Cary resided where.

The second son of the immigrant, Captain Henry Cary "The Builder," inherited and lived upon a plantation in the interior of Warwick known as "The Forest." This was the western half of Zachary Cripps' patent, adjoining the Cary plantation of Richneck. Captain Henry Cary (1650?-1720) was a contractor and constructed among other public buildings the courthouse of York County, the fort on the York River, the first Capitol at Williamsburg, the reconstruction of William and Mary College after the fire of 1705, and the Governor's Palace.⁴⁰ His son Henry Cary, Jr., was also a builder and constructed the Brafferton Building, the Chapel, and the President's House⁴¹ at the College of William and Mary, and a number of churches and courthouses including St. Paul's at Hanover, and St. John's, Hampton. He had attended William and Mary College. In 1726, he was Keeper of the Magazine at Williamsburg, the town to which he moved after his father's death. He "docked the entail" and sold "The Forest" to Colonel Wilson Cary of Richneck in 1730. His descendants include such famous names as the Bells, Randolphs, Pages and Harrisons.⁴² Henry Cary Jr. also built the Ampthill House in 1732, a house which still stands on the edge of the James River in Richmond at the south end of Ampthill Road off Cary Street Road. Before being moved in 1929-30, the house stood beside Falling Creek on the south bank of the river. By tradition, the house is said to be a substantial reproduction of the Richneck Plantation house.⁴³

In his will, Miles Cary the immigrant left 1,050 acres he had acquired from his father-in-law, which had been under the original Zachary Cripps' patent, to his second and third sons, Henry and Miles.⁴⁴ Henry's portion was known as "The Forest." Miles Cary Jr.'s portion was called "Richneck" because of its situation between the forks of Stone Run. In the senior Miles' will, he speaks of his boundaries as Claiborne's Neck dams, and it would appear that the later name "Richneck" was a modification of "Claiborne's Neck." Miles Cary Jr. built a house at Richneck which survived as late as 1865, and ruins of the cellar of this house still remain.⁴⁵ Wilson Cary, the son of Miles Cary Jr., acquired "The Forest" and other adjacent lands so

that at his death in 1772, the Richneck estate comprised some 4,000 acres. Four generations of Carys called Richneck "home" and lived and were buried there. The property is now bisected by the railroad from Richmond to Newport News. Colonel Wilson-Miles Cary, the son of Wilson Cary, eventually settled at Ceely's, after having sold Richneck in 1793.⁴⁷ Thomas Ceely had resided on this property in 1639, and one of his descendants conveyed the land to Colonel William Wilson. The latter built a large brick home here, and it contained a valuable library which he had collected. It was here also that Colonel Wilson Cary, having inherited this property, imported an array of table silver, one of the plates of which bore the Cary arms and motto "Cari deo nihil carent," a tongue-in-cheek translation being "The Carys, by God, want nothing."⁴⁸

The pattern of widespread holdings in early colonial days in Virginia was made up of the wealthiest planters, among the first twenty of whom were Benjamin Harrison, Edward and Landon Carter, Thomas and Peyton Randolph and Archibald and Wilson Miles Cary, John P. Custis and George Washington. All of these had taxable property worth more than 40,000 pounds monetary. It is interesting to note that Thomas Jefferson ranked 28th, Patrick Henry 90th and St. George Tucker and James Madison were not even on the list of the 100 wealthiest families and largest landholders of the day.⁴⁹

The plantation of Ceely's fell to ruin in the War Between the States, and there is today only a frame house standing on the original site, not the elegant brick structure of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. An interesting anecdote concerns Mary, one of the daughters of Wilson-Miles Cary, who was courted by George Washington (and gave him her answer in the famous "refusal room" of Carter's Grove). Her father discouraged her in accepting George Washington's attentions by reminding her that she had a coach of her own to drive.⁵⁰ Another daughter of Colonel Wilson-Miles Cary (Sarah Nicholas) married James H. McHenry, after whom Fort McHenry was named. The remaining Cary homesite, a part from Mulberry Island, was Elmwood. Three generations of Carys lived here and it later belonged to

the Jones family.⁵¹ It adjoined Langley Field in 1919 and probably since has become a part of the Langley-National Aeronautical Space Administration complex.

On Mulberry Island proper there were two Cary plantations: Joyle's Neck with Saxon's Gaol at the south end of the island and Skiff's Creek Plantation at the mouth of Skiffe's Creek on the north end of the island. Miles Cary the immigrant purchased 195 acres from Zachary Cripps "over against Saxon's Gaol and including Joyle's Neck."⁵² He subsequently devised this property to his kinsman, Roger Daniell.⁵³ "Skiff's Creek" Plantation consisted of 360 acres at the mouth of Skiffe's Creek in Warwick County.⁵⁴ The boundaries of Warwick and James City Counties in this area were defined by the General Assembly in 1642-1643 and remain the same today for Newport News and James City County; that is, "Warwick County shall be bounded from the mouth of Keth's Creek (Skiffe's) up along the lower side to the head of it, etc."⁵⁵ Miles Cary the immigrant willed to his youngest son William "the land which lyeth up Warwick River formerly belonging to Captain Thomas Flint and since purchased by me."⁵⁶ The surviving records indicate that William Cary was involved in litigation with the Flint heirs about this land and died "seized" of the 360 acres. We can only conjecture that this was acquired in compromise with the Flints as it does not seem to fit the description of the Flint patent of 1628 or of Miles Cary's will. The 360 acres which became part of Skiff's Creek Plantation must therefore have been the property of the Flints before it passed to William Cary by compromise settlement, but this is not certain. Lieutenant Colonel William Cary (1657-1713), Miles' youngest, married Martha Scarsbrooke of York County. Their children were Harwood, who was given the name not because of any Harwood ancestry but as a compliment by his father to a good friend, Thomas Harwood of Poquoson Parish in York; Martha, who married Edward Jaquelin of Jamestown; Miles; William, who married Judith Jones, previously mentioned; and John.⁵⁷ Harwood Cary married Martha Thruston of Martin's Hundred and had a son, William (1708-1784) who "docked the entail" and sold

the Skiff's Creek Plantation of 360 acres to Allen Jones for 720 pounds in the year 1764.⁵⁸ This Allen Jones was "certainly a descendant of the first Matthew Jones."⁵⁹ During the Revolutionary War, Bourbon was the home of Allen Jones.⁶⁰

POSTSCRIPTS

We would like in closing to raise some questions for further investigation:

1. Was "Bourbon" the home of Allen Jones on Mulberry Island (page 39, Jester, Corporation of Newport News) at one time a part of the Cary Plantation which he acquired by purchase?

2. What and where was "Marshfield" on Mulberry Island, which was willed by Judge Richard Cary in 1785 to his son, Miles?

We would like to take this opportunity to thank "Jody" Davis for her many helpful suggestions in preparing this research, and for her guidance and counsel. Also our thanks to Colonel Hugh Rutledge for his assistance with maps and other helpful information. We are also grateful for the assistance furnished by the staffs of William and Mary College's Swem Library, the City Library of Newport News, the Virginia State Library, and the Virginia Historical Society Library, Richmond. We are further indebted to Mrs. Cary Smith Morton of Denbigh, Virginia, a descendant of Miles Cary the immigrant, for her assistance in locating the gravestones of some of the early Carys and the sites of their plantations.

Footnotes

1. Harrison, Fairfax, The Virginia Carys, NY: The DeVinne Press, 1919, page 3.
2. Ibid., page 8.
3. Ibid., page 9.
4. Harrison, Fairfax, The Devon Carys, Vol. 2, NY: The DeVinne Press, 1920, p. 564 ff.; Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Vol. 12, page 50.
5. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
6. Tyler's Quarterly, Vol. 8, page 11.
7. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
8. Hening, W. W., Statutes at Large, Vol. 11, page 244.
9. Edward Pleasant Valentine Papers.
10. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
11. Nugent, Nell M., Cavaliers and Pioneers, page 2.
12. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
13. Ibid.
14. Op. Cit., Nugent, page 9.
15. Tyler, Lyon G., The Cradle of the Republic, page 238.
16. Whichard, Rogers Dey, The History of Lower Tidewater Virginia, Vol. 1, page 81.
17. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Bruce, Phillip, Economic History, Vol. 11, page 253.
21. Virginia Quit Rent Rolls of 1704 (ms. in Library of the Virginia Historical Society).
22. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Hardy, Stella Pickett, Colonial Families of the Southern States of America, NY: T. A. Wright, 1911, page 127.
27. Op. Cit., Whichard, Vol. 11, pages 195-196.
28. Harrison, The Devon Carys, loc. cit.
29. Op. Cit., Harrison, The Virginia Carys, pages 32-33 and 138-139.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., pages 138-139.

33. Harrison, The Virginia Carys, pages 32-33.
34. Ibid., page 54.
35. Op. Cit., Whichard, Vol. II, page 197.
36. Cole Genealogy.
37. Warwick County Papers (list of microfilms at Virginia State Library, Miscellaneous Court Items. Item No. 110. Reference CM81 (1)).
38. Op. Cit., Harrison, The Virginia Carys, page 96.
39. Ibid., page 42.
40. Ibid., page 86.
41. Virginia Gazette, September 23, 1966.
42. Op. Cit., Harrison, page 88.
43. Ibid., page 96.
44. Ibid.
45. Harrison, The Devon Carys, Vol. II, page 605.
46. Harrison, The Virginia Carys, page 96.
47. Ibid., page 97.
48. Ibid., page 98.
49. William and Mary Quarterly, (Third set), Vol. II, page 364.
50. A guide to the Old Dominion, Commonwealth of Virginia, page 262.
51. Op. Cit., page 34.
52. Harrison, The Devon Carys, Vol. II, pp. 564ff.
53. Harrison, The Virginia Carys, page 166.
54. Op. Cit., Hening, Vol. VIII, page 34.
55. Ibid., Vol. I, page 250.
56. Harrison, loc. cit., page 128.
57. Ibid., page 129.
58. Op. Cit., Hening, Vol. VIII, page 34.
59. Tyler's Quarterly, Vol. VI, pages 44 thru 47.
60. Ibid., pages 47 and 146.





The grave of "Mylles" Cary on what is now farmland at Windmill Point, Denbigh, surrounded by a fence.



The Matthew Jones House between Harrison Road and Taylor Avenue at Fort Eustis overlooks the James River. Somewhat modified, its upper story of the main house was added about 1895. (see page 16).

CAPTAIN WILLIAM PEIRCE "ANCIENT PLANTER" AND EARLY SETTLER OF MULBERRY ISLAND IN VIRGINIA

When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, he brought with him a Norman, William Algernourne de Perci, by name, who was granted large fiefs in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Eventually the chief seat of the family was Alnwick Castle in Northumberland County, England. A William De Percy "gave the timber" for construction of the famous York Minster at York, probably in the eleventh century.

Throughout the ages, the de Perci name was kept; however, many variations in the spelling of the name were adopted by various descending branches of the family. We, ourselves, have found about 25 variants in spelling which increased our research problems. It was not uncommon to find that the same person changed the spelling of his name several times in his lifetime, or that a husband and wife would spell their names differently. For the purpose of this paper, we are adopting P-E-I-R-C-E as the preferred spelling of Captain William Peirce's name.

Returning to the de Perci family history, the fourth Lord Percy became the first Earl of Northumberland in the fourteenth century. The eighth earl was committed to the Tower of London because of a plot in favor of Mary, Queen of Scots. A son of this eighth earl, George Percy, because of the political situation unfavorable to his family, decided to seek his fortunes in America and joined the Virginia Expedition which sailed from England December 20, 1606. He succeeded John Smith as governor in 1609 and helped Jamestown survive the "starving time." King James I's Second Charter to the Treasurer and Company for Virginia lists both "George Percie, Esq." and a "Captain Pearse" as separate individuals. George Percy was also known as "Lieutenant Percy" and "Captain Percy" in reference to his position in the colony rather than to military titles. George Percy left Virginia for England in April 1612 never to return.

In addition to the above confusion of names, there was a "William Perce, laborer" who came to Virginia in 1608. He probably had no connection with Captain William Peirce because of his lowly station in life. Other contemporary "William Peirces" were the famous sea captain who ran a "trans-Atlantic ferry service," particularly to the Plymouth Colony between 1622 and 1641 and some ten other William Peirces who emigrated to the colony between 1636 and 1652. To further confuse the situation, there were four "Jane Peirces"--one who was a member of the "Lost Colony" of Roanoke Island, North Carolina; Jane, the wife of the Plymouth sea captain; Jane, the wife; and Jane, the daughter of "our" Captain Peirce.

Records of the early days of the Colony are very sparse, because, in addition to normal attrition, fire at Jamestown and later Richmond destroyed a great deal of valuable information. Further, the struggles of the early days at Jamestown were not conducive to record-keeping. There are only short sketches available concerning various phases of Captain William Peirce's life. His first official appearance in history is 1618 when we learn that one Francis England bought property across the James River in now Isle of Wight County, which adjoined property already owned by Captain Peirce. At this time, Captain Peirce was a mature man; married, the father of at least one daughter, who was married the following year to the famous John Rolfe; and he had lived in the Colony with wife and this daughter for eight years. The earlier history of Captain Peirce then unfolds in his purchase of lands, his muster, his commissions, his records of attendance at the General Court and Assembly, and his involvement in the political depositions of the Governor.

There is no information available to us as to the date or place of birth of William Peirce other than he was born in England. We know nothing of the date or circumstances of his marriage, except that he was married and had at least the one child prior to coming to Virginia. In the muster rolls of 1624, his wife and daughter Jane are listed as having come in the "Seaventure." Obviously, the duties of Captain William Peirce as a "lieutenant" under Cap-

tain George Yeardley, precluded wife and daughter, Jane, from accompanying their sponsor aboard the "Seaventure." The "Seaventure" was the flagship of the "Third Supply" which left England in June 1609 with Sir Thomas Gates, the governor-elect aboard, and Admiral Sir George Somers in command of that fleet. In July, a violent hurricane was encountered off Bermuda and the "Seaventure" was shipwrecked but the balance of the fleet struggled on to Virginia. This shipwreck was made famous by William Shakespeare in "The Tempest." Wood and supplies salvaged from the wreck and augmented by cedar cut on the islands permitted construction of two small ships, the "Deliverance" and the "Patience," in which after about nine months the survivors proceeded to Virginia. Worthy of note is that during this time on Bermuda, John Rolfe and his wife became parents of a daughter, named Bermuda, who died before their departure for Virginia.

As a point of interest before we leave the Bermuda story, we find that Bermuda had a surveyor, Mr. Richard Norwood, sent from England in 1613, initially as a pearl-diver. He ultimately surveyed the Bermuda Islands twice and prepared the first map in 1618, plotting the eight tribes and the individual shares. A "Mr. Peirce" is shown as having one share in Southhampton Tribe, with a sketch of a house on the share. We wonder, since so many shareholders' names are also famous in the Virginia Colony, if "Mr. Peirce" is our Captain Peirce.

Upon arrival of the survivors of the shipwreck at Jamestown in 1610, Sir Thomas Gates had his commission as governor read to the colonists and planters assembled in the church. Among those present were Sir George Somers, Captain Christopher Newport with some of his sailors, William Strachey, William Peirce, John Rolfe and other leading men.

About 1612, John Rolfe introduced a new strain of tobacco into the colony, which later proved to be an export crop of major proportions and probably saved the colony from extinction. In 1614, Rolfe married the famous Pocahontas, his first wife having died. Later, he took Pocahontas to England where she was presented at court by Lady Delaware. She

died at Gravesend in 1617 as they were preparing to return to Virginia. Their son, Thomas Rolfe, remained in England to be reared and educated by an uncle and much later brought to Virginia as a head-right of Captain William Peirce. Two years after the death of Pocahontas, Rolfe married again, this time to Jane Peirce, daughter of Captain William Peirce and his wife Jane. It is interesting to conjecture that John Rolfe was a contemporary of Captain Peirce. Peirce was now known as an "ancient planter" by virtue of his having planted land prior to the departure of Sir Thomas Dale from Virginia in 1616.

One of the first Negroes to come to Virginia in 1619 was Angelo who came in the "Treasurer" and was a servant to Captain Peirce. The year of the Indian Massacre, 1622, John Rolfe died, and his father-in-law, William Peirce was named executor. One Thomas Pierse was killed with his wife, child and others at Mulberry Island in that massacre. What if any his relationship with William Peirce, we do not know. Thomas Pierse was probably the same one who had been the sergeant of the First Virginia Assembly in 1619 at Jamestown. Edward Brewster, a servant of Lt. Pierce, was another person killed in the massacre, at Edward Bennett's plantation on the south side of the James River. Captain Peirce was called upon to go to Martin's Hundred immediately to relieve such as were left alive and to recover any cattle or corn.

Following the death of Captain William Powell in the massacre, Captain Peirce succeeded him as the captain of the fort at Jamestown. The next year, 1623, he was commissioned to be captain of the guard, lieutenant governor and commander of James City, of the island, blockhouses and people. In this commission, Captain Peirce is referred to as being a trusty and well-beloved friend of the governor and a man of virtue and sufficiency. That year he was also ordered to go up the Chickahominy River against the Indians in reprisal for the massacre. The secondary mission was to destroy the Indian's corn crop at a time too late for them to make another crop. To accomplish his mission, Captain Peirce was directed to levy men, corn and tobacco (which was the monetary

commodity of the time), both for the expedition and for the defense at the fort.

In 1623 Captain Peirce became for the first time a burgess, representing James City. For many years thereafter he was both a burgess and a member of the Council for Virginia. He also served at times as a member of the General Court, as well as being an attorney for Sir Francis Wyatt, the governor. Captain Peirce appeared before the General Court and the council at various times and in connection with assorted matters, such as to recover his loss of a shallop; to recover debts due him; and the settlement of estates of friends and relatives including the estate of Thomas Peirce after the massacre.

As late as 1627, no law had been passed offering a bounty for destruction of predatory wolves. William Peirce and others had to appoint servants to look after the cattle of their masters and protect them from the wolves.

George Sandys, the colony's new treasurer, in 1623 was living at the house of Captain William Peirce at Jamestown and experimenting with raising silkworms. The silkworms were being tried as a means of developing an export crop for the economic security of the colony. Sandys wrote in a letter to John Ferrar in England that Peirce had the fairest dwelling in Virginia. Evidently it was a new house as from the description it had a "dining hall." He also praised Peirce and said he was "not inferior to any." While living there, Sandys translated Ovid's "Metamorphoses" into English verse.

The same year, Jane Peirce Rolfe married Captain Roger Smith, a friend, neighbor and also a contemporary of her father. She is listed in Roger Smith's muster with her daughter Elizabeth Rolfe and others. It also lists Peirce as having 13 servants at Mulberry Island and 30 of his company there. The 30 men were probably the "Governor's Guard" as that consisted of 30 men. It was an elite corps granted by the General Assembly and paid for out of the public levy for the protection of the governor from bodily harm. Captain Peirce and his wife Jane were shown by this muster as living in James City.

In 1629, Captain Peirce and his wife Jane visited England together with the governor and others. William Peirce left an account of the status of the colony in Virginia which is still on file in the Public Records Office in London which he wrote as "an ancient planter of twenty years standing." As proof of his departure for England, it is noted that Peirce agreed January 20, 1629, a debt he owed to Mary Flint for eight and a half barrels of corn "before his departure." While in England, Mrs. Peirce mentions in a letter about also having been twenty years in the colony and wrote that she had gathered as much as a hundred bushels of excellent figs a year from her garden at Jamestown. She also wrote that she could keep a better house in Virginia for 300 or 400 pounds a year. Yet when she went to the Colony she had little or nothing. An excellent account of her life in Virginia has been written by Captain John Smith. While in England, Peirce probated the will of John Rolfe, his former son-in-law.

In 1635, members of the council, Samuel Mathews, John Utie, John West, William Perrie, Thomas Harwood, William Claybourne, William Ferrar, William Peirce, George Monefie and Dr. John Pott revolted against Governor Sir John Harvey because of his dissentious and overbearing actions. They arrested and deposed the governor, choosing in his place Sir John West as governor. Harvey complained to the king, and the offenders were ordered to England to answer for their "misdemeanors." Peirce was in England for eighteen months without being brought to trial. Finally, he applied for and was granted a license to return to Virginia to manage his estates which were in danger of being lost. He was required to post 1,000 pounds sterling for his security to insure his return to England to appear in the Star Chamber. The case against these men was never brought to trial and never finalized. However, King Charles I reinstated Harvey as governor until 1639 when due to his tyranny and actions, he was removed by royal decree. Peirce, while in England, gave reluctant approval to the Goring proposition, which Virginia opposed, by which England would contract to buy some 1,600,000 pounds of tobacco at the rate of

six pence a pound delivered in the colony and eight pence a pound delivered in England. The planters would secure a profit of only four pence.

Several incidents of note are found after his return from England:

In 1639, Peirce and his neighbor across the river, William Spencer, were chosen by one Thomas Peirce of Mulberry Island (obviously NOT the Thomas Peirce killed in the massacre), to select a cow for Thomas' eldest (minor) son whose name was also William Peirce.

Six of Captain Peirce's servants were tried, convicted and punished for stealing a skiff and attempting to escape to the Dutch plantations. The punishments were severe and included branding in the cheek, thirty stripes, and working in shackles for various numbers of years.

Peirce was obviously living at Mulberry Island in 1640, because in a conveyance of 50 acres of land on Lawne's Creek, he is so listed. Also at this time, he was selected by the General Assembly to "view" the tobacco crops in Warwick County, Denby Parish, Stanley Hundred and Hope Creek.

In the will of Anthony Barham of Mulberry Island, probated in 1641, "Joane Perce," wife of "Mr. William Perce," was willed 50 shillings to make her a ring. It is probable that Barham's wife Elizabeth, was the daughter of one "widow" Alice Pierce, who later married Thomas Bennett of Isle of Wight County.

Peirce continued as a member of the council until his probable death in 1647.

THE PROPERTIES

We have reserved to this point a discussion of the lands and properties acquired by Captain Peirce because of their importance to this organization (Fort Eustis Historical and Archaeological Association). The accounts of properties were very loosely described, archaic in their wording and difficult to decipher, cryptographically as well as geographically. Therefore, we will present to you our interpretations of the locations and boundaries of these lands, particularly on Mulberry Island.

We must recall that Captain Peirce in every way was intimately tied in with the events at the Jamestown settlement. The early colonists were not permitted to acquire any lands for the first seven years under the Letters Patents of King James I, dated 1606. Many of the early settlers were ill-prepared to take on the burdens of colonization and as a result produced little towards the early settlement.

As a spur to progress, Sir Thomas Dale in 1613 allotted each man three acres of cleared ground in the nature of farms. For this "they were to work eleven months for the common store" (from which they were fed) "and had two bushels of corn from thence; and only had one month allowed them to make the rest of their provisions." We feel this is the time that Peirce acquired the land where his house stood, on The Back Street in "The New Towne" on Jamestown Island. This is also probably the "3 or 4 acres" which Mrs. Peirce referred to as her garden in which she grew figs, when she wrote her interesting letter in 1629 in England. The site of this land is still marked and visible today at Jamestown along with those of his elite neighbors on The Back Street: Dr. John Pott, Sir George Yeardley, Sir Francis Wyatt and others.

At some early date, probably immediately subsequent to the initiation of land grants in 1616, Peirce acquired either 25 or 27 acres of land at Pasbehays at "The Maine," immediately across the neck of land from Jamestown Island. Little is known of this land except that he gave it in open court to one Alexander Stoner and that it had passed through six different hands before 1648. Peirce harvested 3,000 or 4,000 pounds of tobacco in 1620 from lands in "The Maine" on which he had six or seven men working. Perhaps it was harvested from this 25 or 27 acres of land, or from an unidentified tract of 1,170 acres in James City County, or both. The latter tract was given to Peirce in exchange for the transportation of some 24 persons coming to Jamestown. Unfortunately there is no exact location nor date available, nor are the names of the headrights legible.

Captain William Peirce had early acquired land "across the water;" there were some 30 persons belonging to John Rolfe (Peirce's son-in-law), William Peirce, William Spencer (a neighbor and friend) and a Mr. Ewyns planting tobacco and corn there in 1622. The first record of a patent being issued to Peirce for land on the southerly side of the James River is for 2,000 acres on Lawne's Creek under the date of June 22, 1635. This was given for transportation of 40 persons into the colony, one of whom was Thomas Rolfe, the son of John Rolfe and Pocahontas. Another person was James Eustis, perhaps a collateral ancestor of Abraham Eustis for whom Fort Eustis is named. This property is easily outlined because it was bounded on the east by Lawne's Creek, on the south by Peirce's Creek which still bears his name today, on the west by the woods towards Chippoakes Creek, and on the north by the lands of William Spencer where the Virginia Power Company's nuclear plant is being constructed [since completed, identified with Surry, Virginia]. Edward Bland, a London merchant, purchased this land from Peirce on July 7, 1646.

There were two small parcels of land "across the water" owing Peirce as headrights for transportation of three persons, 100 acres of which he transferred in open court to his friend and neighbor, William Spencer, in 1632; and the other, a gift of 50 acres to Robert Lawtheat (or Lathacot) March 1, 1635.

We have spent many interesting hours studying maps and patents, especially of Mulberry Island, at the British Public Records Office in London, the Library and Historical Museum in Hamilton, Bermuda, the State Public Library in Richmond, Virginia, and of course, the Swem Library of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. The following resume is strictly our interpretation of the presently available information concerning these patents.

The total of all of Captain Peirce's lands as described on Mulberry Island would equal about three-quarters of the total available acreage of the island. Adding to this the patents held by other

men [in the records], we would come up with figures which would be astronomical. Obviously then, for one or more reasons, the lands were re-patented either in whole or in part, to confirm or strengthen the legal rights of an individual. For example, the political situation created many changes: the 30 Years War was in progress in Europe, the Virginia Company was dissolved in 1624, King James I died in March 1625, King Charles I revoked the liberal commission of 1631 and later appointed a different type of commission for governing the colonies, all of which dampened the spirit of freedom of the colonists and set the stage for the Governor Harvey incident as well as inspiring many of the re-patents and confirmations of land patents.

It was the custom of the time to grant patents for the transportation of persons into the colony; 50 acres were allowed to those who came or brought others over. It was also a condition of Virginia patents that the land so granted must be "planted" and "seated" within three years. "Seating" was defined as "building a house and keeping a stock one whole year upon the land;" and "cleering, tending and planting an acre of ground" was accounted as "planting." In addition, certain privileges were granted to "ancient planters," of which Captain Peirce was one, because he planted before 1616; right to patent 100 acres for his personal adventure prior to 1616; right to patent 50 acres for each additional share he bought or for the adventure of anyone for whom he paid 12 pounds, 10 shillings.

Mulberry Island and Captain Peirce

We have studied and re-studied the "Office Constructing Quartermaster, Camp Abraham Eustis, Va., Index to Property Maps," dated March 6, 1919, and have the following solutions to offer as outlined below and in the attached appendices:

1. Certain reference points are unchanged over the years, such as rivers, creeks and points of land.

2. Captain William Claybourne, the first surveyor-general, did not arrive in the colony until 1621. All mapping and platting of patents must have

been done by others. The accuracy was remarkable.

3. Since there is no record of any re-platting of Mulberry Island, we assume that major boundaries of land holdings were unchanged through the centuries, except to sub-divide some of the large holdings.

4. We have consolidated the twentieth century plots to come up with our estimates of the various properties of Captain Peirce and of Stanley Hundred as shown on the map by outline tracings [reduced for publication]. Percent of variation between declared and actual acreages are zero to 1.99 percent.

In 1643, when Captain William Peirce's land holdings were at the peak, he held 2,100 acres. This adjoined 1,000 acres which belonged to John Brewer, who acquired it in 1629 from Lt. Thomas Flint and his wife, Mary, who had owned it for only a year. This 1,000 acres was known as Stanley Hundred and was first granted to Sir George Yeardley in 1621, when he was governor, for the transportation of various persons. The 2,100 acres of Captain Peirce consisted of 1,450 acres patented in 1643 for the adventure of 29 persons and 650 acres by patent to him dated December 31, 1619. The 650 acres were a portion of 1,700 acres patented by Peirce, John Rolfe, Captain Roger Smith and "some others" prior to John Rolfe's death in 1622.

One other piece of property belonging to Peirce is mentioned in the records. This is known as the "Baker's Necke" property and comprises 360 acres. The exact date of the original grant is missing. This might have been a re-patent of land already granted to him, as it appears to us to cover a portion of the original 650 acres Peirce patented in 1619. One source states that it was granted in 1637, and we wonder if it was not a part of the reasons for Captain Peirce's petition to the king in 1637 to return from England after 18 months awaiting trial in the Harvey affair. An interesting feature of this acreage is that Peirce evidently wanted the tract known as "Baker's Necke" because he had been granted 400 acres for the transportation of eight persons. He used the 360 acres and had his dwelling

on it, and had 40 acres remaining due.

It is too much of a coincidence that these tracts of Stanley Hundred and the lands of Captain Peirce and his sons-in-law John Rolfe and Roger Smith, can be identified on the cited map of the present century with so small a margin of error. (The greatest margin of error lies in the lands of Stanley Hundred: 1.99 percent and was a matter of litigation in the courts, January 10, 1626.) We cannot expect all identifying marks to still be in existence, because massive trees and marked trees have been removed; the names of creeks have changed although their courses can be identified; and names of adjoining property owners have faded into history. The prominence of men like Captain Peirce owning property on Mulberry Island in the history of the early colony proves that it was a very important place indeed.

We recommend that continuing efforts by this organization, to locate by maps, aerial photographs, terrain identification and any other possible means, the historic sites and plantations on and near Mulberry Island, be continued, and that such sites be adequately identified for posterity.

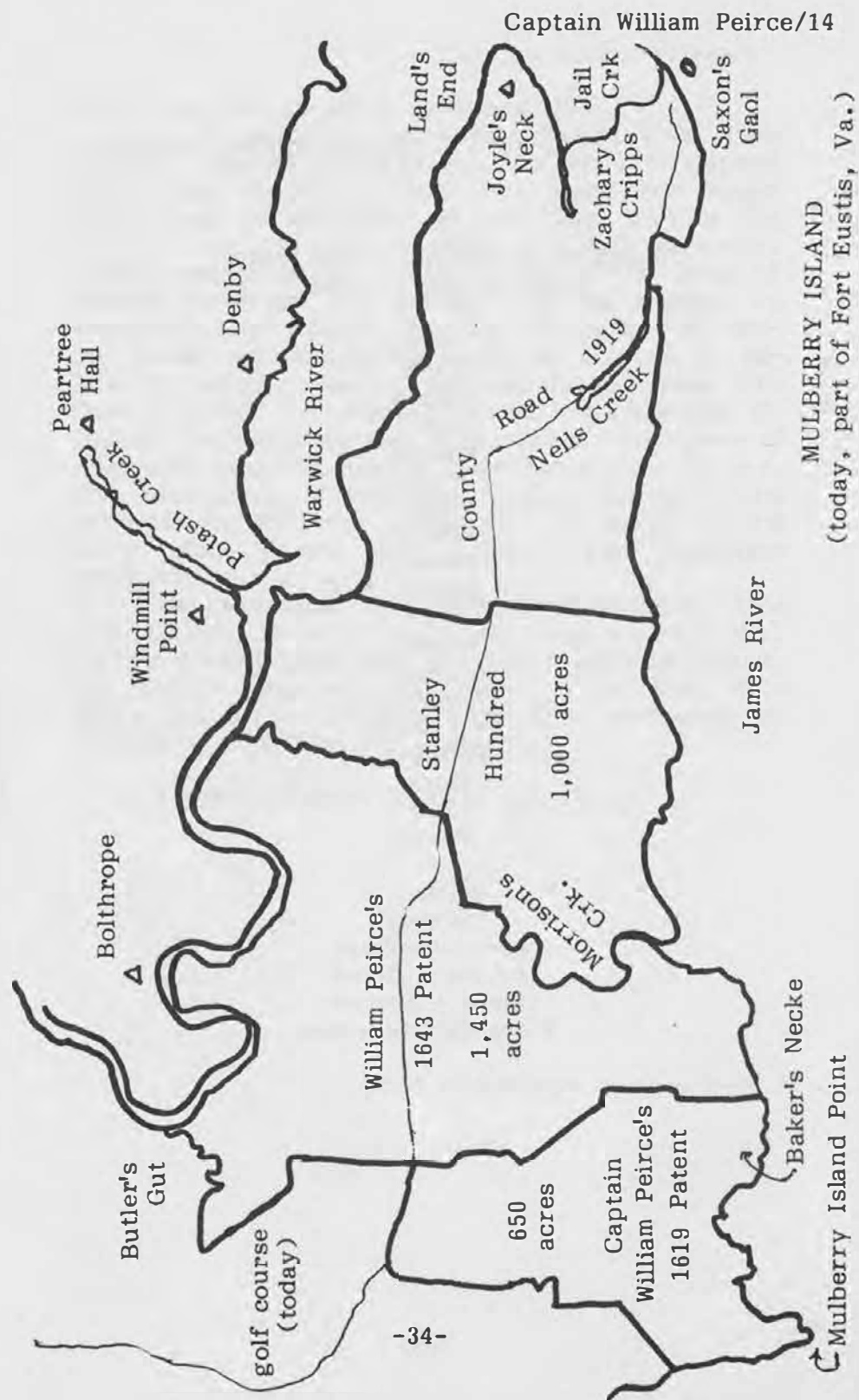
Paper presented January 22, 1970.

Variants in the spelling of Peirce
found in the records.

* Pearce
Pearse
Peerce
Peers
Peerse
* Peirce
Perce
Percey
Percie
Percy
Pers
Perse
Persey
Peurce
* Pierce
Piercie
Piers
Pirse
Pyers

dePerci
LePercy
Percy-en-Auge
Petros - Greek
Pierre - French
Piers de Graveston

* Most common spelling of name



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RESEARCH INTO 17th CENTURY
GENEALOGICAL RECORDS

Research into seventeenth century genealogies isn't as difficult as it sounds. In some respects it is easier than nineteenth and twentieth century research. For one thing, there weren't as many persons to trace in the seventeenth century settlers and from the written accounts they left much that can be gleaned of the life and history of those days. There is actually a wealth of material from which to draw. For the New England states, there are such literary sources as the New England Historic Genealogical Register, the New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, the Genealogical Dictionary of Maine and New Hampshire, Arnold's Rhode Island Vital Records, the Barbour Collections for Connecticut, and the Mayflower Society's current "Five Generations Project." For Virginia, there are Captain John Smith's Travels and Works, the Colonial Virginia Register, Nugent's Cavaliers and Pioneers, Jester's Domestic Life in Virginia in the 17th Century, Hiden's Adventurers of Purse and Person, and Tyler's Cradle of the Republic, to mention just a few.

In order to make a more interesting account of what can develop by delving into those early records, we have selected two similarly named but very different individuals who lived at the same time. One was a New England sea captain, the other captain of the guard at Jamestown, both named "Captain William Pierce (Peirce)"

The material which we have is gleaned from the above mentioned books and about 30 additional references. Our purpose here is not to provide the exact references, but they are easily obtained (for Peirce, see the paper on "Captain William Peirce" in this collection.) The side-by-side comparisons begin on the next page.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM PIERCE, sea-captain

I was born in Cambridge, England, in 1590.

I died the 13th of July 1641, probably at sea, since I was fatally wounded by the Spanish after stopping at New Providence, Bahama Islands.

My parents were James and his wife, name unknown.

I had three children. Their names are unknown.

I first appeared in Colonial records in 1623 when I captained the "Anne" to Plymouth Colony.

I attempted a voyage in the "Paragon" in 1622, of which I was captain, but put back. The ship was owned by my brother John.

My ship, "Paragon" was wrecked in February 1623. I was captain of the "Anne" on a voyage from England to New England, arriving July or August 1623. My name first appeared in Colonial records this year.

As captain of the "Charity," I brought Winslow and the first cattle to New England in 1624.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM PEIRCE, Va. planter

I was born in England, the date and place unknown. I died in Virginia, the date and place unknown, but prior to June 22, 1647.

The names of my parents are unknown.

I had several children; the only one whose name is recalled was Jane (or "Joane") who became the third wife of John Rolfe and later the second wife of Captain Roger Smith.

I first appear in Colonial records as a member of the 1609 expedition to Virginia in the "Seaventure," flagship of Sir George Somers and Sir Thomas Gates, which was shipwrecked on Bermuda. My wife, Jane, and my daughter, Jane, arrived in Jamestown on the "Blessing" in 1609. I arrived on June 2, 1610 and thereupon made my home at Jamestown.

I was appointed Captain of the Fort at Jamestown after the massacre of March 22, 1622, when the captain, William Powell, was killed. I had two large tobacco plantations in association with John Rolfe; one across the James River from Jamestown and the other at Mulberry Island. During the summer I was appointed to lead a raid against the Indians in retaliation for the March massacre.

I was commissioned Captain of the Governor's Guard and Lieutenant Governor of James City, and in February and March 1623, I represented James City in the Assembly. I was commissioned to go against the Indians again on July 23, 1623. In November, I was given an order to levy men, tobacco and corn throughout the plantations for the subsistence of the men of the fort for six months.

My wife, Jane, and I were residents of James City with four servants in the muster of January 24, 1624. I had 13 servants at my plantation at Mulberry Island in the muster of January 25, 1624. I was mentioned as one of the leading men of Jamestown, father of John Rolfe's third wife, Jane, and successor to Captain William Powell as captain of the fort. I

Captain Pierce, sea-captain

I captained the "Jacob" in 1625 with Winslow and more cattle.

I captained the "Mayflower" (not the original) out of London March 1629 arriving at Salem, Massachusetts, May 15.

I captained the "Lyon" from Bristol on two voyages. On my arrival on the first voyage, I found great destitution at the Bay and when Winthrop arrived June 12, 1630, he sent me back to England for food. I sailed December 1 from Bristol and arrived February 5, 1631.

I captained the "Lion" (or "Lyon") sailing from Salem, Massachusetts, April 1, 1631, and arriving at Bristol, England, April 29th. On the return voyage, I arrived November 29th.

I lost the "Lyon" near Feake Island off the Virginia coast (near Cape Charles) November 2, 1632, about 5 AM, the mate in charge having omitted sounding. I was in Virginia on Christmas Day 1632 at which time I wrote to friends in Boston describing conditions in the southern colony.

I brought the first cotton from the West Indies into New England, 1633.

Captain Peirce, Virginia planter

was a Burgess from James City and as such signed a Declaration with the governor and others, requesting the King to send over commissioners to investigate the hardships of the past 12 years at the Virginia Colony.

I represented the Corporation of James City in the General Assembly, May 10, 1625 and was a member of the Convention that year. Henry Bradford was my servant at James City. A court order of January 2, 1625, required the payment of tobacco to me "before Mondye next" by Mr. Moone. Between April 19 and 25 at a meeting of the General Court, I presented and signed before the Court, an inventory of the effects of Thomas Peirce who was killed in the massacre of March 22, 1622. I gave a deposition in connection with a trial of Edward Sharples.

With my wife Jane I visited England with the Governor and other Virginians. While there, we each wrote a separate report concerning our twenty years in the Colony.

On May 21, 1630, I proved the will of John Rolfe, my son-in-law, in Prerogative Court of Canterbury, England.

I became a member of the Council in Virginia in 1631 and remained such until 1644. With others, I signed a paper of accord between the Governor and Council of Virginia on December 30, 1631.

During the year I was member of the Grand Assembly Council at James City, which met on the 4th of September 1632. In addition, I was present at the Court at James "Cittie" on June 5, 1632. I was mentioned as a member of the Virginia Council of State in 1632.

I was a member of the Grand Assembly Council at James City the 1st day of February 1633.

Captain Pierce, sea-captain

I captained the "Rebecca" and the "Naragansett" in 1634. (probably in trans-Atlantic service).

In 1635, I took the ship "Defense of London" on a voyage to the West Indies; afterwards rescuing refugees in the Connecticut valley. In 1636 I captained the "Desire," a ship of 120 tons built at Marblehead. Also this year I carried Endicott's forces to Block Island as well as bringing the first sweet potatoes from the West Indies to New England. In 1637 I brought supplies from Boston for the Pequot War.

I made a voyage from Boston to the West Indies in 1638 carrying several Pequod prisoners and bring back Negro slaves and an "aligarto." I also made a voyage to England.

Captain Peirce, Virginia planter

I was a member of the Council and signed papers with other members of the Council of Virginia to the Privy Council in England February 8th and March 14, 1634. On June 20, at Patuxent, Maryland, commissioners who had been appointed by the governments of the Maryland Colony and the Governor of Virginia, met to investigate the charges that William Claiborne incited the Indians to acts of hostility against the settlers at St. Mary's. The commissioners from Virginia included me.

These were notable years for me and must be considered together. After much friction between the Council of Virginia and Sir John Harvey, the Governor of Virginia, several protest meetings being held in York County and elsewhere, on April 28, 1635, I with several others ousted Sir John Harvey from office. In July 1635, he complained to the King and to the Lords Commissioners for Foreign Plantations, concerning the mutinous proceedings of the Council. As a result of the complaint, the prime actors in the mutiny, including me, were ordered December 22, 1635, by the King to be sent to England to answer for their misdemeanors of usurping the government. I must have reached England about February 1636, because on September 29, 1637, I petitioned the Privy Council stating I had been in England for about 18 months answering the information against me in the Star Chamber and requested permission to return to Virginia to settle my estates. I posted 1,000 pounds security to appear in the Star Chamber when required. The following day, September 30, 1637, the Privy Council gave me a license to return to Virginia allowing me full liberty and permitting me to better manage my estates there.

On March 1, 1635, I conveyed 50 acres of land in Lawne's Creek to Robert Lawtheat. On June 22nd, I patented 2,000 acres at Lawne's Creek.

Following my return from England, I resumed my plantation duties and attended meetings of the Council of Virginia.

Captain Pierce, sea-captain

I captained the "Desire" from London to New England, January 17, 1639. Also I made a voyage to England in the record time of 23 days. During the year I printed an Almanac, the first bound book in English printed in North America by Stephen Day. This was a marine almanac calculated for New England.

I carried a party of dissenters to settle in the West Indies, but owing to the hostility of the Spaniards, I put back. I stopped at New Providence, Bahama Islands, to bring away a congregation living there. The Spaniards had taken possession, but I stood in hoping to rescue my countrymen. The enemy opened on the "Desire" with cannon fire; I sent all below except myself and one sailor; both of us were fatally wounded July 13, 1641. (This is the last information available concerning me.)

Captain Peirce, Virginia planter

I was a member of the Court and present for the session on January 6, 1639. I was also selected to "view" the tobacco crop at that meeting.

I am shown to be a member of the Court and present at the session of October 13, 1641.

I was a member of the Council of Virginia and a member of the Council March 1, 1642. I was present at the Quarter Court at which Sir William Berkeley presided for the first time as Governor on March 8th, and was a Burgess for the Grand Assembly held at James City the 1st day of April. Governor Berkeley administered the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the Councillors, including me, William Peirce, Esq., upon his arrival in the Colony.

In 1643, I gave a tract of 25 to 27 acres at Pasbehays in open court to Alexander Stomar (or Stoner). I was present at the Grand Assembly at James City on March 2, 1643. On December 16th, I patented 2100 acres of land at Mulberry Island.

On October 1, 1644, I was a member of the Grand Assembly Council at James City.

On January 20, 1645, Dame Elizabeth Harvey asked the Court to substitute me and one other as trustees in place of four men under a feoffment made by her for use of her son by a previous marriage. February 17th I was a member of the Grand Assembly Council at James City. In 1645, I went on an expedition to the Northern Neck, called "Chicoan."

I was listed as being second in the standing of the Council in 1646. On July 7th, I sold my 2,000 acres of land at Lawnes Creek to Edward Bland of London. The only information on my final date is that I was deceased by June 22, 1647.

HISTORICAL MARKERS ON FORT EUSTIS

1. FORT EUSTIS

Camp Abraham Eustis was established March 1918 as a U.S. Coast Artillery Training Center and was re-designated Fort Eustis in 1923. During the depression it was a civilian camp. In World War II it served again for Coast Artillery, Anti-Aircraft and later a P.O.W. camp. In 1946 Fort Eustis became the training center for the Army Transportation Corps. Since 1962 it has served as the "Home of the Transportation Corps."

Ft. Eustis Hist. & Arch. Assn.--1968

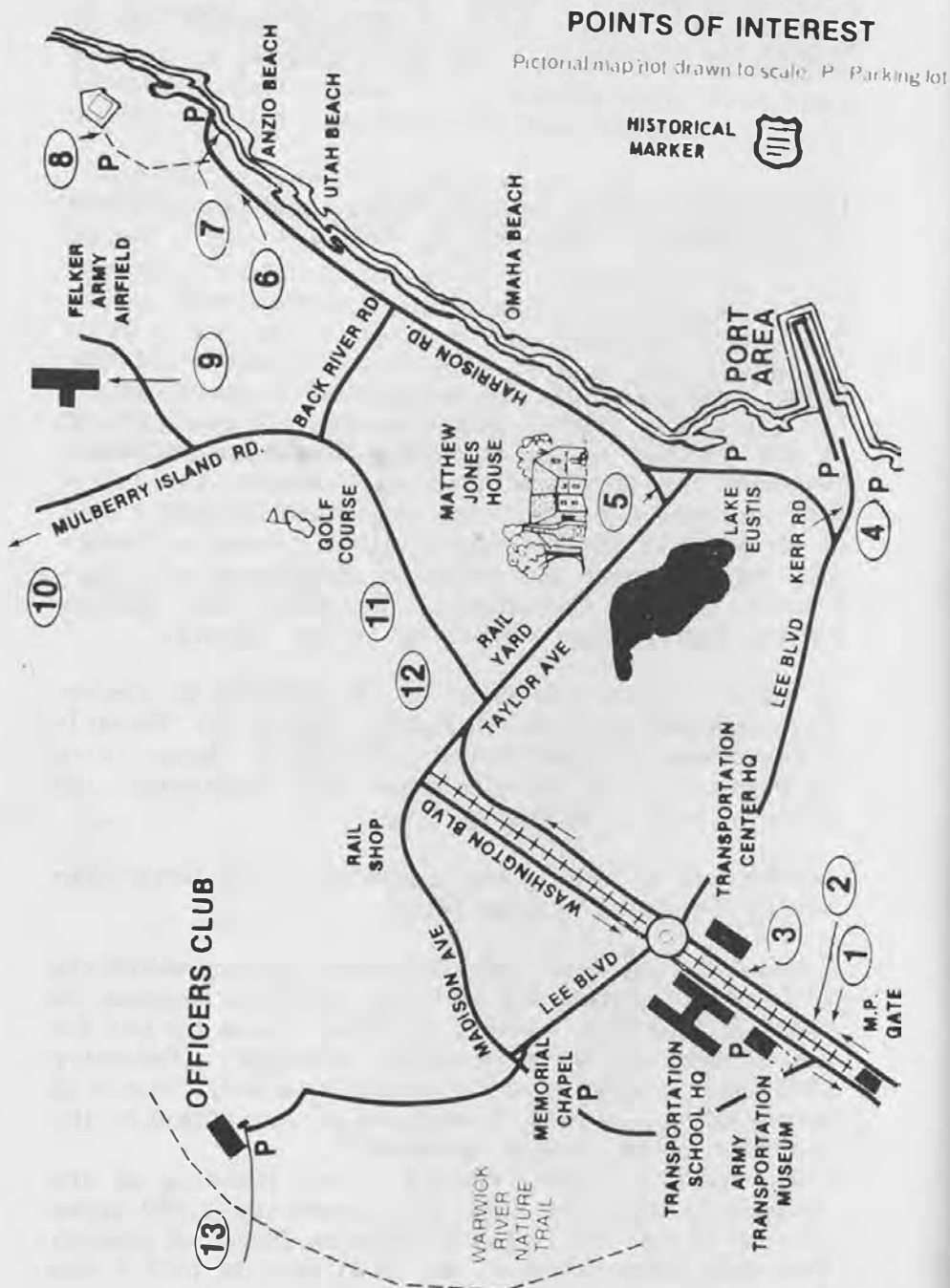
The Fort Eustis Historical and Archaeological Association was founded in 1965 as a non-profit organization to identify, research and preserve the historical and archaeological heritage and artifacts of the post's past, and to cooperate with local governments and associated historically related groups. Its members, both military and civilian, help in research projects, present papers, help in "digs" and clearing land, and attend informative monthly meetings. Fort Eustis encompasses historic Mulberry Island, site of Woodland Indian culture, Colonial homesites, Civil War fortifications, early Artillery encampments, and much more.

FEHAA has been active in locating historical and archaeological sites at Fort Eustis and has been successful in raising money for purchase or seeking sponsorship of historical markers.

The Association meets monthly for lunch or dinner to hear guest speakers on various historical topics, and other times to work on research projects and assist in archaeological "digs," or to take a bus tour to historical sites in the area. Annual membership is inexpensive.

The address is P.O. Box 4408, Ft. Eustis, Va., 23604.

Col. James D. Rockey
FEHAA president



2. GENERAL ABRAHAM EUSTIS (1786-1843)

Born in Petersburg, Va., and a Harvard graduate, he led a light artillery battalion at the capture of Toronto in the War of 1812. He later commanded Fort Monroe, Va., and began there the first Army service school. He led Army units in the Black Hawk War, 1832, the Seminole War, 1836-38, and the Canadian Border disputes, 1838-39. In 1918 this post, then a subinstallation of Fort Monroe, was named in his honor.
Erected 1974

3. GLEBE LANDS

In conjunction with a brick church of the Anglican faith, which stood near this spot in 1660, there were Glebe lands which were set aside for the clergy during their incumbency. The Glebe lands were worked and stocked with necessary buildings, cattle and hogs, by the congregation. Under Act of Assembly, the Glebe lands were ordered dissolved after the Revolutionary War and Matthew Drewry bought 53 acres in Mulberry Island for 16 shillings per acre in 1804.
Erected 1977

4. SKIFFES CREEK

Known as Keath's Creek in 1632, this stream was probably named for nearby landowner, the Rev. George Keath. It was the boundary between James City and former Warwick County. LTC Wm. Cary (1657-1713), son of Miles Cary, immigrant, inherited the 360-acre Skiffes Creek plantation. His grandson, Wm. Cary, Jr. (1708-84) sold it to Allen Jones. A sentry was posted here during the Revolution to warn of British ships in the James.
Erected 1975

5. MATTHEW JONES HOUSE (closed to public)

Said to have been called "Bourbon," this fine example of medieval-style architecture was built in the early 1700's as a story-and-a-half brick house. In 1893 it was remodeled to a full two stories. With its arched doorway, massive chimneys, and a unique tower entrance, it is quite different from the typical manor house of colonial Virginia. The "Jones House" was designated a Virginia Historic Landmark in 1969.

Ft. Eustis Historical & Arch. Association--1969

6. MULBERRY POINT & SIR THOMAS WEST

Off this point in early June 1610 anchored the small ships of the starving colonists who had abandoned Jamestown and started down the river to return to England. It was here they were apprised of the timely arrival of Sir Thomas West (Lord de la Warr) with abundant supplies and new settlers, and the colonists were able to return to their homes at Jamestown. Lord de la Warr (1577-1618) was the first Governor and Captain General of the Colony of Virginia.

Virginia Society Daughters of Colonial Wars--1976

7. JAMES RIVER RESERVE FLEET

The James River National Defense Reserve Fleet was set up in 1925 to preserve government-owned merchant vessels which could be reactivated in national emergencies. Fleet ships were called to service for WWII, Korea, Suez Canal Crisis, and Vietnam. The James River anchorage reached its peak in 1947 when 640 ships, including many Liberty and Victory Ships, were moored here. The fleet is maintained by the U.S. Maritime Administration.
Erected 1974

8. FORT CRAFFORD

This pentagon-shaped earthwork was constructed by Confederate forces in 1861-62. Taking its name from the family living here, it became the right anchor of MG John B. Magruder's line of defense across the Peninsula from Yorktown. The fort was abandoned without combat in May '62 when the CSA withdrew to Richmond in the beginning of the Peninsula Campaign. A fine example of its type, it was designated a National Historic Place in 1974.
Erected 1975

9. FELKER ARMY AIRFIELD

The world's first military heliport, Felker Army Airfield was dedicated on 7 December 1954 at ceremonies attended by aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky and MGs Rush B. Lincoln and Paul F. Yount. The basic plan of the unique circular landing pad for helicopters was originated by LTG (then COL) Wm. B. Bunker in 1949, anticipating the role of TC in Army Aviation. The \$1,000,000 facility is a memorial to Warrant Officer Alfred E. Felker, Army Aviator.

David E. Condon Chapter, AAAA and Ft.
Eustis Historical & Arch. Association--1970

10. CIVIL WAR LINE

Part of General John B. Magruder's defense line across the the Peninsula, these earthworks were constructed in 1861-62 to prevent Union forces from turning the flank at Mulberry Island. Manned by the 14th Virginia Infantry and later the 5th Louisiana Infantry, and several artillery batteries, the line was abandoned in May '62 when the Confederates withdrew to Richmond before the Union advance at the start of the Peninsula Campaign. Erected 1975

11. JOHN ROLFE

The earliest prominent settler on Mulberry Island was John Rolfe, who with others owned a 100-acre plantation here. Rolfe's introduction of a new type of tobacco was the economic salvation of the Jamestown colony. After the death of his 2d wife, the famous Pocahontas, he married Jane, daughter of CPT Wm. Peirce, who also had land here. Rolfe died about the time of the 1622 Indian uprising.

Society of the Colonial Dames of the 17th Century
Erected 1974

12. MULBERRY ISLAND

The peninsula formed by the Warwick and James Rivers was called Mulberry Island by Captain John Smith as early as 1610. Its name came from the wild mulberry trees growing here. Once an Indian hunting ground, it was one of the first places after Jamestown to be settled by the English colonists. Among the early colonial landowners were Governor George Yeardley, John Rolfe and Captain William P. Peirce. Erected 1974

13. MAGRUDER DEFENSE LINE

From April 5-May 2, 1862, the battery was part of the Confederate Defense Line of Gen. Magruder which spanned the Peninsula. Manned by the Halifax Light Artillery, it fired on Union troops of Gen. McClellan occupying the east bank of the Warwick River. The defenders, though greatly outnumbered, delayed the union army a month, enabling Gen. Lee to prepare the defense of Richmond. Erected 1975